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Leza L Olson 10/31/2006 02:39:18 PM From DB/Inbox: Leza L Olson

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Text:

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 04330

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CHARGE: PROG

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
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RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 3250  
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 8118  
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 2370  
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RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 4895  
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 05 TEL AVIV 004330

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM  
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA  
HQ USAF FOR XXXX  
DA WASHDC FOR SASA  
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA  
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR  
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD  
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD  
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL

PARIS ALSO FOR POL  
ROME FOR MFO

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [IS](#) [KMDR](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

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SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
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[1](#)1. Mideast

[1](#)2. Iran

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Key stories in the media:  
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Ha'aretz reported that the Bush administration is making efforts to train the Presidential Guard of Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas in order to prepare it for a potential violent confrontation with Hamas forces in the Gaza Strip. According to the paper, General Keith Dayton, the American security coordinator in the territories, appeared before representatives of the Quartet in London last week and presented them with a program that calls for Egyptian, British and perhaps even Jordanian instructors to train forces loyal to Abbas. The paper also quoted Palestinian sources as saying that the training of a "Special Presidential Guard" started already a month ago, under the guidance of an American military instructor in Jericho.

Yediot reported that a deal involving abducted Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit is entering its crucial stage. The paper reported that a delegation of the Hamas movement in Damascus has arrived in Cairo for meetings with Egyptian Intelligence Minister Omar Suleiman, who has been charged with the issue. The paper also cited Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniya as saying that serious efforts are made in order to finalize the prisoner exchange deal.

Israel Radio quoted Lebanese security sources and eye witnesses as saying that IAF warplanes flew at a low altitude over Beirut, its suburbs and large areas of South Lebanon on Tuesday.

Maariv reported that Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Moratinos is initiating a second Madrid Convention with Syria and Iran. The paper reported that Russia is in favor and that the negotiations with the US are ongoing.

Israel Radio cited US Ambassador to the United Nations, John Bolton, as expressing concern that Syria and Iran are trying to destabilize Lebanon's democratically elected government by violating the UN arms embargo. He was also quoted as calling upon Syrian President Bashar Assad to abide by the commitment he made to Secretary-General Kofi Annan to support the resolution [1701] and the arms embargo.

Leading media cited Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as saying that Iran shall supply "A harsh and appropriate response" to any attempt to sanction it.

Ha'aretz reported that in his meeting with the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said that a decision on how to handle the situation in Gaza will be decided in the coming days. Maariv reported that Olmert also told the committee that the operation will expand.

Israel Radio reported that IDF troops killed two Hamas militants Tuesday morning in the southern Gaza Strip. The radio also quoted Palestinian security sources as reporting that an Israeli naval vessel fired at two Palestinian boats near the Gaza coast on Tuesday, wounding two fishermen and later detaining several people on board.

All media reported that in a General Staff meeting held on Monday it was decided that none of the four commanders of the divisions that fought in the war in Lebanon will lose his job. The media noted that Defense Minister Amir Peretz still needs to approve the

decision.

All media reported that the Knesset approved Avigdor Lieberman's appointment to Minister for Strategic Affairs. The Jerusalem Post reported that Lieberman is already slated to visit the US on December 8, 2006 to take part in the Saban Forum at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution in Washington.

All media reported that Ophir Pines [Labor party], Minister of Science, Culture and Sports have resigned following Labor party's decision to support Lieberman's entry into the coalition. The media speculated who will replace him; among the names raised was the one of former Prime Minister Ehud Barak. Maariv reported that PM Olmert said in closed talks that Israel needs Barak in the government.

Ha'aretz reported that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak yesterday denied reports in Egypt that its security forces had beefed up their presence on the border with the Gaza Strip.

Ha'aretz cited a source close to President Moshe Katzav as saying that the President is considering asking the Knesset for a leave of "temporary incapacity" if the attorney general decides to indict him.

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I1. Mideast:

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Summary:  
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Senior diplomatic correspondent Shimon Shiffer wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "Information that has arrived from Washington has led some to the conclusion that the Bush administration intends to launch a new, far-reaching initiative before the end of 2006 that will change the status quo in the Middle East."

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: "The Gaza Strip's economy is being destroyed, and its reconstruction depends on setting up a moderate government of Hamas and Fatah.... Meanwhile, the rampant smuggling of rockets intended to strike at Israeli communities and missiles aimed against IDF tanks and aircraft continues. The smuggling is pushing the IDF to recommend an extensive operation in the Gaza Strip ... The key to the crisis is in Cairo. Egypt must wake up and turn the key before the IDF rushes in and breaks the lock."

Veteran op-ed writer Eitan Haber wrote in the lead editorial of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "It is convenient for every one to deal with the outposts: the US president, Condoleezza Rice, Ehud Olmert, Amir Peretz and others.... Damn it, why does it matter and to who?"

Block Quotes:  
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II. "Come Up With a New Initiative"

Senior diplomatic correspondent Shimon Shiffer wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (10/31): "In [PM] Olmert's surroundings one can recognize two opposing views. The first view vaunts waiting: sit and do nothing. The second view is that Israel needs to brainstorm and to step forward with a political initiative of its own before it finds itself being led by the nose with international initiatives.... Information that has arrived from Washington has led some to the conclusion that the Bush administration intends to launch a new, far-reaching initiative before the end of 2006 that will change the status quo in the Middle East. At the center of this initiative will be a plan for a gradual withdrawal from Iraq. The administration is also expected to engage in dialogue with member countries of the 'axis of evil,' Iran and Syria. The Bush administration will explain that these channels of dialogue are crucial for achieving calm in Iraq. The departure of the Americans from Iraq will have dramatic ramifications on Israel's security and the expected dialogue between the Americans and Iran and Syria. Olmert is likely to hear about the crystallization of that initiative in the course of his visit to Washington. Senior political officials say that Olmert would do well were he to arrive

in American with proposals of his own before the pressure on him to accept the proposals of others began."

## II. "Egypt's Obligation"

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (10/31): "Two interrelated issues sit at the center of Israel's expectations of Egypt: the release of abducted soldier Gilad Shalit, and closure of the gate for weapons and explosives smuggling into the Gaza Strip. If Egypt continues to talk meekly and act weakly, it may lead to an escalation in the Israeli-Palestinian relationship, which it would like to avoid. The escalation, which may also include a broad IDF ground operation in residential areas close to the Egyptian border, will also have a negative effect on relations between Jerusalem and Cairo.... Despite Egypt's concerns over the strengthening of extremists, it is behaving as if it is comfortable with a bleeding and anxious Israel. The price the Palestinians have paid to date stands at 300 dead.... The Gaza Strip's economy is being destroyed, and its reconstruction depends on setting up a moderate government of Hamas and Fatah, but even such a move is being delayed until Shalit is released. Meanwhile, the rampant smuggling of rockets intended to strike at Israeli communities and missiles aimed against IDF tanks and aircraft continues. The smuggling is pushing the IDF to recommend an extensive operation in the Gaza Strip before the arms build-up reaches a scale similar to Hezbollah in Lebanon. The key to the crisis is in Cairo. Egypt must wake up and turn the key before the IDF rushes in and breaks the lock."

## III. "Leave the Outposts Alone"

Veteran op-ed writer Eitan Haber wrote in the lead editorial of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (10/31): "It is convenient for every one to deal with the outposts: the US president, Condoleezza Rice, Ehud Olmert, Amir Peretz and others. All day long, all the newspapers, outposts 'hora' [a Israeli folk dance]: to build, to destroy, to establish, to dismantle. Damn it, why does it matter and to who? If some day they decide to dismantle the settlements in the West Bank or parts of it, they will turn the outposts into dust. If they decide to stay forever in the West Bank the outposts will turn into blooming gardens. In our short, complicated and conflicted history our leaders have managed to prove (mainly Begin and Sharon) that they know how to do both: to build and to destroy."

## 12. Iran:

### Summary:

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "Time is running out, and Israel and others who recognize the threat [by Iran] owe it to themselves and to the rest of the international community to strenuously encourage non-military action before it is too late."

### Block Quotes:

"Before its Too Late"

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (10/31): "As Iran closes in on a nuclear capability week by week, that 'luxury' of taking a back seat while the world does nothing to thwart the program becomes one that Israel can increasingly ill-afford. Israel, it must be stressed, does not seek military intervention in Iran. It has reasonably expected that the international community would internalize the threat posed by Teheran and would rapidly take concerted action short of military force to deter the Iranians. But in the face of determined international foot-dragging, if not downright apathy, the last thing Israel can allow itself is to 'wait and see' what, if anything, the EU, US, Russia and China intend to do. Time is running out, and Israel and others who recognize the threat owe it to themselves and to the rest of the international community to strenuously encourage non-military action before it is too late."

JONES